

U.S. Patent Application No.: 10/789,035
Amendment dated December 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of October 7, 2004

PATENT

Attorney Docket No.: 713-57-PA

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings and versions of the claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1: (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The EDP of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 13, wherein each of the pontoon and the column ~~have~~ has a center well therein, and wherein the center well of the column is disposed concentrically over the center well of the pontoon.

Claims 3-4: (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The EDP of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 13, wherein the column comprises one or more compartments, at least one of which has a buoyancy that is adjustable.

6. (original) The EDP of claim 5, further comprising means for forcing sea water ballast into and out of the adjustably buoyant compartments.

7. (original) The EDP of claim 6, wherein the water ballast forcing means comprise pressurized air or a pump.

8. (original) The EDP of claim 5, wherein the compartments are tubular.

9. (currently amended) The EDP of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 13, wherein ~~[[a]]~~ the lower end of the column comprises an open truss structure.

Claim 10: (canceled)

11. (currently amended) The EDP of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 13, wherein the horizontal periphery of at least one of the deck and the pontoon is polygonal.

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12. (currently amended) The EDP of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 13, further comprising an upright derrick ~~slidably~~ movable on an upper surface of the deck between a first position over the central opening of the deck and a second position horizontally displaced from the first position.

13. (new) An extendable draft offshore platform (EDP), comprising:

- a buoyant deck having a central opening;

- a pontoon having an adjustable buoyancy;

- a buoyant column having a lower end and an upper end, the lower end being attached to the pontoon and extending upwardly therefrom, the column being vertically movable through the central opening of the deck between a raised position and a lowered position as the pontoon is respectively raised and lowered by the adjustment of its buoyancy;

- a plurality of radial arms fixed to the upper end of the column, each of the arms having an outer end extending radially beyond the periphery of the column;

- a plurality of receptacles on the deck, arranged and configured to receive the outer ends of the radial arms in a vertical, slide-in engagement when the column is in its lowered position; and

- a locking element that is engageable with each of the arms and its corresponding receptacle when the arms are received in the receptacles so as to lock the upper end of the column to the deck.

14. (new) The EDP of claim 13, wherein each of the radial arms has a first apertures in the outer end thereof; wherein each of the receptacles has a second aperture therethrough that is aligned with the first aperture when the outer end of an arm is received in the receptacle; and wherein each of the locking elements is a locking pin that is configured for insertion through the first and second apertures to rigidly lock the outer end of each of the arms into its corresponding receptacle.